



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: S. Laster et al.

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SUPPORTING ONLINE AUCTIONS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Bellevue, Washington 98004

May 18, 2001

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS:

Before examining the above-identified patent application, please amend the application as follows.

AMENDMENT

In the Claims:

In Claim 1, first line of subparagraph (e), please delete "automatically".

Please add the following new Claims 10 - 38:

--10. The method of Claim 8, further comprising the step of providing a schedule of times at which the plurality of auctions are to be held to enable an online bidder to select a channel.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of enabling an online bidder to participate in bidding on items at a plurality of different auctions that are being held at overlapping times.

12. A system for facilitating integral online and onsite bidding at an auction that does not require transmission of video or audio data to bidders who are online, comprising:

(a) an online server that is adapted to communicate data over a network, to and from online bidders and to and from a site of the auction, said server including a processor, and a memory that is coupled to the processor and in which is stored a database that includes information about items to be sold at the auction and a plurality of machine instructions;

1 (b) said machine instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the
2 processor to carry out a plurality of functions, including:

3 (i) enabling prospective bidders who are online to access the information
4 about the items over the network;

5 (ii) communicating bidding information over the network to and from:

6 (1) bidders who are onsite at the site of the auction; and

7 (2) bidders who are online;

8 (iii) receiving bids from bidders who are online and conveying said bids
9 over the network to the site of the auction; and

10 (iv) receiving bidding result information from the site of the auction and
11 conveying the bidding result information over the network to the bidders who are online.

12 13. The system of Claim 12, wherein the information conveyed over the network includes
13 at least one of: an identification of at least one item currently being auctioned, an identification of
14 any current highest bidder making a bid either online or onsite, an indication of any current highest
15 bid amount, and an asking bid amount.

16 14. The system of Claim 12, wherein bids received from prospective bidders who are online
17 each include at least one of a bid amount, and an identification of the bidder who is making the bid.

18 15. The system of Claim 12, wherein the machine instructions executed by the server
19 cause an identification of any current highest bid amount and an identification of any current highest
20 bidder, who is either online or onsite, to be displayed to bidders who are online.

21 16. The system of Claim 12, wherein the machine instructions cause the server to accept
22 registration information from prospective bidders who are online prior to enabling the prospective
23 bidders to participate in an auction.

24 17. The system of Claim 16, wherein the machine instructions cause the sever to assign an
25 identification number to a bidder who is registered to bid online, thereby reducing an amount of data
26 transmitted over the network when identifying an online bidder who is making a bid.

1 18. The system of Claim 12, further comprising an onsite client computer that includes a
2 local processor coupled to a local memory in which machine instructions are stored, and a display
3 coupled to the local processor, said local processor executing the machine instructions stored in the
4 local memory, causing the local processor to employ the display at the site of the auction to provide
5 an indication of any current highest bid amount and an identification of any current highest bidder,
6 who is either online or onsite.

7 19. The system of Claim 18, wherein local processor transmits bidding information
8 regarding the bids that are made onsite over the network to the server, which conveys the bidding
9 information to the bidders who are online.

10 20. The system of Claim 12, further comprising an electronic signaling device that is
11 provided to prospective bidders who are onsite, said electronic signaling device being associated with
12 a bidder to whom it is provided and used to electronically register a bid made by said bidder by
13 transmitting a signal indicative of a bid.

14 21. The system of Claim 12, wherein a plurality of auctions are available online, each
15 auction of the plurality of auctions offering a different set of items, said machine instructions causing
16 the processor to produce a schedule of the plurality of auctions.

17 22. The system of Claim 21, in which each auction in the schedule is referenced as a
18 different channel.

19 23. The system of Claim 12, wherein the database includes at least one of images, voice
20 recordings, and textual data regarding items offered for auction, said machine instructions causing the
21 serving to make contents of the auction available for access by prospective bidders.

22 24. The system of Claim 12, wherein the machine instructions further cause the server to
23 enable a user to modify and supplement the information included in the database.

24 25. The system of Claim 12, further comprising a remote computing device coupled to the
25 server over the network and used at a clerking station located at the auction.

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1 26. The system of Claim 12, further comprising a remote computing device coupled to the
2 server over the network and used at a cashiering station, to carryout out at least one of: entering and
3 transmitting high bids by onsite bidders over the network to the online bidders, preparing invoices,
4 printing the invoices, and recording data regarding collection of payments for items purchased by
5 onsite bidders at an auction.

6 27. A memory medium on which are stored computer executable instructions, which when
7 executed by a computer, cause the computer to implement a plurality of functions, including:

8 (a) registering prospective online bidders for participation in an auction that is
9 held at a remote site and in which onsite bidders will also participate;

10 (b) enabling prospective bidders to access a database in which information
11 concerning items for auction is included; and

12 (c) transferring bidding data to and from an online bidder over a network coupling
13 the online bidder to the remote site during the auction, said bidding data not including video or audio
14 data from the auction.

15 28. The memory media of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
16 computing device to enable prospective bidders to selectively access one or more channels, each
17 channel corresponding to a different auction being held at a remote site at which onsite bidders also
18 participate.

19 29. The memory media of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
20 computing device to provide a ticker display of all highest bids entered online and at the remote site.

21 30. The memory media of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
22 computing device to implement administrative functions related to operation of an auction.

23 31. The memory media of Claim 27, wherein the administrative functions integrate online
24 bidding and onsite bidding.

25 32. The memory medium of Claim 27, wherein the administrative functions include at
26 least one of:

- 1 (a) providing online advertising;
2 (b) preparing invoicing statements identifying each item purchased by a bidder;
3 (c) accumulating data regarding bidders;
4 (d) accumulating data regarding items that are auctioned; and
5 (e) producing a report listing results of an auction.

6 33. The memory medium of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
7 computing device to transmit bidding data for a plurality of bids over the network in a single packet.

8 34. The memory medium of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
9 computing device to transmit a plurality of highest bids submitted by all bidders to all online bidders
10 in the auction.

11 35. The memory medium of Claim 27, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
12 computing device to enable an online bidder to participate simultaneously in a plurality of onsite
13 auctions over the network.

14 36. The memory medium of Claim 35, wherein each of the plurality of onsite auctions is
15 included in a schedule of auction and is associated with a different channel.

16 37. The memory medium of Claim 36, wherein the machine instructions further cause the
17 computing device to enable an online bidder to select a time interval at which to automatically cycle
18 between channels included in a plurality of different channels selected by the online bidder.

19 38. The memory medium of Claim 37, wherein the machine instruction enable an online
20 bidder to selectively interrupt cycling between the different channels to remain on a specific channel
21 of interest so that the online bidder can participate in bidding in an auction associated with the
22 specific channel.--

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